

REMARKS

In an Office Action mailed February 24, 2004, the Examiner indicated that Claims 12-15, 22, 26, 27 and 37-42 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. In addition, claims 17-20 were indicated as being allowable if rewritten to overcome Section 112 rejections. Claims 74-80 are allowed without amendment. Claims 8, 10, 16, 31, 32 and 44-73 were withdrawn following an earlier restriction requirement. Finally, claims 1-7, 9, 11, 21, 23-25, 28-30, 33-36 and 43 stand rejected.

Specification

The Specification is amended to address informalities noted by the Examiner.

Drawings

A marked-up sheet of drawings is enclosed herewith. Reference sign 306 has been added.

Claims 1-4, 6-11, 21, 23 and 24

Independent claim 1 stood rejected over U.S. Patent No. 4,712,268 to Heinonen. By the present amendment, Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of dependent claim 11, but not the limitations of claim 9 from which claim 11 depends. In addition, claim 1 has been amended to clarify that a midportion of the cleaning sheets between the front and rear edge portions are not bonded to one another. Therefore, amended claim 1 now requires a plurality of cleaning sheets with front and rear edge portions that are at least partially disposed on the upper surface of the mop head, with the front and rear-edge portions being bonded together, while the mid portions are not. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected original claim 11 over the combination of Heinonen and UK Patent Application No. 2,310,796 to Telesca. The Examiner points out that original claim 11 did not distinguish the bonding of the edge portions and any other portion of the refill. As such, the Examiner took the position that the Telesca reference, wherein all portions of the sheet are bonded to all portions of another sheet, meets this limitation. By the present amendment, the claim has been clarified to

provide that the mid portions are not bonded to one another. As such, amended claim 1 should be allowable over the combination of Heinonen and Telesca.

In addition, Applicant submits that there is no motivation for the cited combination of Heinonen and Telesca. In rejecting claims under 35 U.S.C. §103, the Examiner must provide a reason why one having ordinary skill in the pertinent art would have been led to modify the prior art, or to combine references, to arrive at Applicant's claimed invention. There must be something *in the prior art* that suggests the proposed modification, other than the hindsight gained from knowledge that the inventor choose to combine these particular things in this particular way. Uniroyal Inc. v. Rudkin-Wiley Corp., 837 F.2d 1044, 1051, 5 USPQ2d 1434, 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1988). The Examiner is also required to make specific findings on a suggestion to combine prior art references. In Re Dembeczak, 175 F.3d 994, 1000-01, 50 USPQ2d 1614, 1617-19 (Fed. Cir. 1999). Applicant finds no teaching or suggestion in either the Heinonen or Telesca references that would motivate one of skill in the art to combine the two references. The Examiner submits that it would be obvious to form the stack configuration of Heinonen using adhesive from Telesca. However, Heinonen has no need for an adhesive to maintain the sheets in a stack configuration, since the edges are all retained by upwardly extended spikes. Telesca, on the other hand, provides a roll of absorbent material that may be retained in the rolled configuration using adhesive. This configuration differs from the present invention, and does not motivate a combination with Heinonen.

Even if Heinonen and Telesca were to be combined, neither suggests just bonding front and rear edge portions. In light of the above, applicant submits that claim 1, as amended, is in condition for allowance.

Claims 2-4, 6, 7, 9, 21, 23 and 24 depend from claim 1 and are allowable therewith. Claim 4 has been amended, such that the language is more consistent with claim 1, from which it depends. Claims 5, 12, 15 and 22, which originally depended from claim 1, have been amended into independent form as discussed below. Claims 8 and 10 had been withdrawn in response to the prior restriction requirement. Claim 8 has now been cancelled. However, Applicant submits that claim 10 should be reconsidered, since it depends from claim 1 and should be allowable therewith. Claim 11 has been cancelled, since its limitations are incorporated into claim 1.

Claim 5

Claim 5 was a dependent claim and stood rejected over U.S. Patent No. 4,712,268 to Heinonen in combination with UK Patent Application No. 2,310,796 A to Telesca. The Examiner states that the sonic welding, as required by claim 5, is an obvious variant of the adhesive used in the Telesca disclosure.

Claim 5 has been amended into independent form, to include the limitations of claim 1 from which it depended. It has not otherwise been amended. Applicant submits that there is no support for the combination of the Heinonen and Telesca references. As discussed above, there must be something *in the prior art* that suggests the proposed modification, other than the hindsight gained from knowledge that the inventor choose to combine these particular things in this particular way. Uniroyal Inc. v. Rudkin-Wiley Corp., 837 F.2d 1044, 1051, 5 USPQ2d 1434, 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Applicant finds no teaching or suggestion in either the Heinonen or Telesca references that would motivate one of skill in the art to combine the two references.

Even if Heinonen and Telesca were to be combined, neither teaches the use of sonic welding to retain a stack of removable cleaning sheets in a stacked configuration. The Examiner submits that sonic welding is an obvious variant of adhesive. Applicant respectfully disagrees with this unsupported conclusion. Sonic welding provides advantages such as avoiding the need for any additional material (adhesive), avoiding tackiness when an outer sheet is peeled away, allowing portions of the stack to be compressed and retained in this compressed configuration, and suitability to manufacturing where a plurality of sheets may be stacked and sonically welded, without the requirement to individually apply adhesive to each sheet. If sonic welding is an obvious variant of adhesive, as claimed by the Examiner, Applicant asks that the Examiner provide a reference that teaches such a substitution for use in joining stacks of non-woven material for use on the claimed implement.

Applicant submits that claim 5 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 12-14

Claims 12-14 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 12 has been rewritten to incorporate the limitations of claims 1, 9, and 11 from which it depended. It is therefore in condition for allowance. Claims 13 and 14 depend from claim 12, and are therefore in condition for allowance without further amendment.

Claims 15-20

Claim 15 was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. It has been rewritten to incorporate the limitations of claims 1, 9 and 11, from which it depends, and is therefore in condition for allowance. Claims 16-20 depend from claim 15. Claim 16 was withdrawn following the restriction requirement. However, as it depends from an allowable claim, Applicant submits that it should be allowed along with claim 15. Claim 16, 17, 19 and 20 have been amended to correct a typographical error which led to the Section 112 rejection.

Claim 22

Claim 22 was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. By the present amendment, it has been amended to include the limitations of claims 1 and 21, from which it depended. It is therefore in condition for allowance.

Claims 25, 28 and 43

Independent claim 25 stood rejected over the combination of the Heinonen and Telesca references. By the present amendment, claim 25 has been amended to provide that the midportions of the cleaning sheets are not bonded to each other. This clarification was discussed with respect to claim 1, above. Also, as with claim 1, Applicant submits that this combination of the Heinonen and Telesca references is not motivated. As such, Applicant submits that claim 25 is in condition for allowance. Claims 28 and 43 depend therefrom, and are also in condition for allowance.

Claim 26

Claim 26 was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. By the present amendment, claim 26 has been rewritten in independent form, so as to include the language of original claim 25 from which it depended.

Claim 27

Claim 27 was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. By the present amendment, claim 27 has been rewritten in independent form, so as to include the language of original claim 25 from which it depended.

Claim 29

Claim 29 was a dependent claim from claim 25, and stood rejected over the combination of the Heinonen and Telesca references, further in view of European Publication EP 0 265 684 A3 to Fritz. As with prior claims, Applicant submits that there is no motivation for the combination of the Heinonen and Telesca references. Even if there were such a motivation for the Heinonen and Telesca combination, there is no motivation for further combining these two references with the teaching of Fritz. As recognized by the Examiner, the Heinonen/Telesca combination fails to teach cleaning sheets with a cleaning layer and a backing layer. Fritz merely provides a two-layer "kitchen roll." While Applicant's review of the Fritz reference is limited to the translated abstract and drawings, it does not appear to motivate the use of the disclosed cleaning cloths with a device such as the Heinonen mop. Likewise, neither Heinonen nor Telesca would motivate one of skill in the art to seek out the two-layer cleaning cloths of Fritz and use them as cleaning sheets on a mop. As such, Applicant submits that claim 29, as rewritten in independent form, is in condition for allowance.

Claims 30-36

The Examiner indicated that claims 30 and 33-36 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and if amended to address the Section 112 rejection. Claim 30 has been rewritten in independent form, so as to include the limitations of claims 29 and 25 from which it depended. Applicant believes that the amendments also address any Section 112 issues.

Claims 31 and 32 were withdrawn in response to the earlier restriction requirement. However, as they depend from claim 30, an allowable independent claim, Applicant submits that they are allowable therewith. Claims 33-36 also depend from claim 30 and are allowable therewith.

Claims 37-38

Claim 37 was indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. By the present amendment, claim 37 has been rewritten in independent form. Claim 38 depends from claim 37 and is allowable therewith.

Claims 39-42

The Examiner indicated that claims 39-42 are allowable if rewritten in independent form. By the present amendment, claim 39 has been rewritten in independent form so as to include the limitations of claim 25 from which it depends. Claims 40-42 depend from claim 39, and therefore have not been further amended.

Claims 44-73

Claims 44-73 were withdrawn in response to an earlier restriction requirement. By the present amendment, these claims have been cancelled.

Claims 74-80

Claims 74-80 were indicated as allowed and have not been amended herein.

Any questions should be directed to Applicant's below signed representative.

Respectfully submitted,

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